



The Bui Gallery
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LE NGUYEN MANH *SHADOW / BONG*

Press Conference: Tuesday, June 21, 2011 2pm
Opening Reception: Tuesday, June 21, 2011 7pm - 9pm
Art Talk: Wednesday, June 22, 2010 5pm
Exhibition: June 21 - August 13, 2011

In an increasingly crowded field of talented social critics, self driven work like *BÔNG* (shadow) sets itself apart from the pack. After all, Le Nguyen Manh doesn't have answers to the ever rising economic pressures in contemporary Vietnamese society, and he doesn't pretend to. Manh is a rare breed among the old guard of social observers. He is intensely focused on himself, his work, and his spiritual evolution and yet his work is distinctly 'Vietnamese'.



Le Nguyen Manh - BÔNG 10 - 100 x 200 cm

Manh achieves this rare duality by focusing on himself rather than the larger implications of society. Unlike artists that make direct social statements with their art, referencing specific moments in history and juxtaposing them with modern times, Manh observes himself in society and thus based on his experience, indirectly comments on his society.

Throughout *Bong*, there are two planes of view. There is the joker's side, of carefree fun and the real world. The joker reaches through, sometimes punching, other times with the mere pinch of his fingers, to the other side where organized society plays on. But what is this society? It's a world populated by girls with flower heads, Benjamin Franklins and blank faces with zippers for mouths. The comic of this farce is the mysterious joker, who is distinctly apart from the charade, obsessed with his face and image, only to dip in once and while, into the game being played on the other side.

Some would call Manh's newest show a black comedy, populated by clowns and piggish cameramen, but it's more a searing look at the self, and how that individualism can only exist behind a thin veil in modern Vietnamese society.



Le Nguyen Manh - BÔNG 3 - 150 x 100 cm